



Town of Groton, Connecticut

Meeting Minutes

Town Council

45 Fort Hill Road
Groton, CT 06340-4394
Town Clerk 860-441-6640
Town Manager
860-441-6630

Mayor Heather Bond Somers, Councilors Dean G. Antipas, Bruce S. Flax, Bill Johnson, Karen F. Morton, Deborah L. Peruzzotti, Rita M. Schmidt, James L. Streeter, and Harry A. Watson

Tuesday, September 18, 2012

7:30 PM

Town Hall Annex - Community Room 1

REGULAR MEETING

I. ROLL CALL

The meeting was called to order at 7:35 p.m. by Mayor Somers.

Members Present: Mayor Somers, Councilor Antipas, Councilor Flax, Councilor Johnson, Councilor Morton, Councilor Peruzzotti, Councilor Schmidt, Councilor Streeter and Councilor Watson

Also present were Town Manager Mark Oefinger, Town Clerk Betsy Moukawsher and Office Assistant Lori Watrous.

II. SALUTE TO THE FLAG

The Salute to the Flag was led by Jack Sebastian.

III. RECOGNITION, AWARDS & MEMORIALS

None.

IV. RECEIPT OF CITIZENS' PETITIONS, COMMENTS AND CONCERNS

Jack Sebastian, 4 East Shore Avenue, would like a question put on the ballot to ask taxpayers whether or not they approve the budget, noting that taxpayers want their taxes to be reduced. Mr. Sebastian remarked that elected officials seem to represent Town employees rather than taxpayers and he believes that Groton is not a democracy. He stated that there is a lot of waste in local government, and he would like citizens to be able to vote on the budget.

V. RESPONSES TO CITIZENS' PETITIONS, COMMENTS AND CONCERNS

Councilor Flax stated that since Mr. Sebastian lives in Groton Long Point, he chooses to pay an additional tax to Groton Long Point Association above and beyond what he pays to the Town for the services it provides. Groton Long Point Association could also save money by doing things differently, but chooses not to because it provides services its residents want. Councilor Flax suggested that it would be more constructive to identify where potential cuts could be made.

In answer to Councilor Antipas, Mr. Sebastian identified the Public Works, Police, and Planning and Development Departments as areas that could be cut.

Mayor Somers feels very strongly that Groton does have a democracy with its Town Council and RTM both voting on the budget. She stated for the record that she does not represent Town employees, but that she represents all of the citizens of Groton.

In answer to Mayor Somers' question about budget increases over the past few years, the Town Manager announced the most recent budget increases and decreases in Town Operations as follows:

2010 - decreased by 1.9%

2011 - increased by .8%

2012 - decreased by 1.1%

2013 - increased by .8% (current adopted budget)

These figures do not include the Board of Education.

The Mayor noted that subdivisions have seen significant increases over that same time period.

VI. CONSENT CALENDAR

a. Approval of Minutes

2012-0272 Approval of Minutes (Town Council)

RESOLUTION ACCEPTING TOWN COUNCIL MINUTES

RESOLVED, that the minutes of the Town Council meeting of September 4, 2012 are hereby accepted and approved.

This Matter was Adopted on the Consent Calendar.

b. Administrative Items

2012-0264 Special Trust Fund Contributions

RESOLUTION ACCEPTING CONTRIBUTIONS TO SPECIAL TRUST FUNDS

RESOLVED, that the Town Council hereby accepts contributions to the Town as follows:

Margaret and Frank Adams - \$100.00 - Groton Utilities Energy Assistance Program
Lois Babcock - \$25.00 - Groton Utilities Energy Assistance Program
Robert and Phyllis Boggs - \$15.51 - Groton Utilities Energy Assistance Program
Kay Chester - \$10.00 - Groton Utilities Energy Assistance Program
David and Veronica Cousens - \$25.00 - Groton Utilities Energy Assistance Program
Amy D'Amico - \$5.00 - Groton Utilities Energy Assistance Program
Richard Davies - \$45.00 - Groton Utilities Energy Assistance Program
Linda Fox - \$20.00 - Groton Utilities Energy Assistance Program
Elisa Giommi - \$10.00 - Groton Utilities Energy Assistance Program
Kay Janney - \$25.00 - Groton Utilities Energy Assistance Program
Jean Kennedy - \$20.00 - Groton Utilities Energy Assistance Program
Bonnie Laganga - \$25.00 - Groton Utilities Energy Assistance Program
Stephen and Johanna Lamb - \$20.00 - Groton Utilities Energy Assistance Program
E. C. Lambert - \$50.00 - Groton Utilities Energy Assistance Program
Clifton Martelle - \$50.00 - Groton Utilities Energy Assistance Program
William Martin - \$10.00 - Groton Utilities Energy Assistance Program
Louis and Lenore Milner - \$100.00 - Groton Utilities Energy Assistance Program
Gail Narita - \$25.00 - Groton Utilities Energy Assistance Program
Bao Nguyen - \$50.00 - Groton Utilities Energy Assistance Program
Donald O'Neil - \$15.00 - Groton Utilities Energy Assistance Program
Demetrios Orphanides - \$50.00 - Groton Utilities Energy Assistance Program
Thomas Powden - \$50.00 - Groton Utilities Energy Assistance Program
Robert and Lynn Rogers - 20.00 - Groton Utilities Energy Assistance Program
James and Ann Sailors - \$25.00 - Groton Utilities Energy Assistance Program
Marilyn and John Turkowski - \$20.00 - Groton Utilities Energy Assistance Program
William White - \$10.00 - Groton Utilities Energy Assistance Program
City of Groton Matching Funds Check - \$34.33 - Groton Utilities Energy Assistance Program
Anonymous - \$20.00 - Social Services Discretionary
Edward and Catherine Kolnaski - \$75.00 - Social Services Discretionary
George Marshall - \$100.00 - Social Services Discretionary
Friends of Fitch for Groton Community Boating Club Program - \$500.00 - Parks and Recreation
Revolving
Theodore and Annette Ainslie - \$50.00 - Groton Utilities Energy Assistance Program
Marie Andersen - \$5.00 - Groton Utilities Energy Assistance Program
June Barrack - \$15.00 - Groton Utilities Energy Assistance Program
Robert and Phyllis Boggs - \$14.59 - Groton Utilities Energy Assistance Program
Harold and Mary Brenton - \$10.00 - Groton Utilities Energy Assistance Program

David and Deborah Downes - \$20.00 - Groton Utilities Energy Assistance Program
 Henry and Patricia Durham - \$10.00 - Groton Utilities Energy Assistance Program
 Clifford Farrington - \$10.00 - Groton Utilities Energy Assistance Program
 Elaine Finn - \$20.00 - Groton Utilities Energy Assistance Program
 Martine Flory - \$6.00 - Groton Utilities Energy Assistance Program
 Dennis and Diane Haines - \$25.00 - Groton Utilities Energy Assistance Program
 Maryanne Haluga - \$12.00 - Groton Utilities Energy Assistance Program
 Dolores Haury - \$15.00 - Groton Utilities Energy Assistance Program
 Darrell and Dorothy Haynes - \$10.00 - Groton Utilities Energy Assistance Program
 Hickey Family LLP - \$25.00 - Groton Utilities Energy Assistance Program
 Paul and Dorothy Huber - \$20.00 - Groton Utilities Energy Assistance Program
 Raymond Hudson - \$20.00 - Groton Utilities Energy Assistance Program
 Constance Miller - \$10.00 - Groton Utilities Energy Assistance Program
 Diana Morales - \$25.00 - Groton Utilities Energy Assistance Program
 Armbandand Nancy Morin - \$30.00 - Groton Utilities Energy Assistance Program
 Sandra Morse - \$20.00 - Groton Utilities Energy Assistance Program
 Barbara and Linwood Navarro - \$10.00 - Groton Utilities Energy Assistance Program
 Patricia Pearce - \$30.00 - Groton Utilities Energy Assistance Program
 Anne and John Potter - \$20.00 - Groton Utilities Energy Assistance Program
 Henry and Carol Reiling - \$10.00 - Groton Utilities Energy Assistance Program
 Kelly Ann Richardson - \$20.00 - Groton Utilities Energy Assistance Program
 Nidia and Bernard Somers - \$2.00 - Groton Utilities Energy Assistance Program
 Stebbins Real Estate - \$50.00 - Groton Utilities Energy Assistance Program
 Emily Thomas - \$5.00 - Groton Utilities Energy Assistance Program
 Barbara Weeman - \$10.00 - Groton Utilities Energy Assistance Program
 Donald Wyle - \$5.00 - Groton Utilities Energy Assistance Program
 Charles Rogers - \$35.00 - Social Services Discretionary Fund
 Lee Vincent - \$50.00 - Social Services Discretionary Fund

This Matter was Adopted on the Consent Calendar.

Thanks were extended to all those who contributed to the Town's special funds. It was noted that Groton Utilities matches donations made to the Groton Utilities Energy Assistance Program by 50%.

c. Deletions from the Town Council Referral List

2012-0157 OpSail 2012 - Update

This Matter was Deleted from Referral List - No further action on the Consent Calendar.

2012-0219 Appointment of William Everett as a Regular Member of the Historic District Commission

This Matter was Deleted from Referral List - Action to be taken on the Consent Calendar.

2012-0265 Results of Operations - FYE 2012

This Matter was Deleted from Referral List - No further action on the Consent Calendar.

2012-0267 Reappointment of Eunice Sutphen to Inland Wetlands Agency

This Matter was Deleted from Referral List - Action to be taken on the Consent Calendar.

2012-0268 Reappointment of Ilona Oberman to Housing Authority

This Matter was Deleted from Referral List - Action to be taken on the Consent Calendar.

2012-0269 Reappointment of John Wirzbicki to Water Pollution Control Authority

This Matter was Deleted from Referral List - Action to be taken on the Consent Calendar.

2012-0270 Reappointment of Richard Dixon to Jabez Smith House Committee

This Matter was Deleted from Referral List - Action to be taken on the Consent Calendar.

2012-0271 Appointment of Natalie Billing to Housing Authority

This Matter was Deleted from Referral List - Action to be taken on the Consent Calendar.

Passed The Consent Calendar

A motion was made by Councilor Watson, seconded by Councilor Schmidt, to adopt the Consent Calendar, including all the preceding items marked as having been adopted on the Consent Calendar.

The motion carried by the following vote:

Votes: In Favor: 8 - Mayor Somers, Councilor Antipas, Councilor Flax, Councilor Johnson, Councilor Morton, Councilor Peruzzotti, Councilor Schmidt and Councilor Watson
Abstain: 1 - Councilor Streeter

VII. COMMUNICATION REPORTS (Other than Committee Reports)

a. Town Councilors

Councilor Watson attended fundraisers for the Groton Animal Foundation and the homeless shelter in New London. He noted that he received an email from an RTM member on his personal email account. All future emails to Town Councilors should be directed to their Town email accounts due to Freedom of Information (FOI).

Mayor Somers attended a joint meeting with the Board of Education at which Councilors received an update on the school redistricting plan. It is required by law that the Board of Education undergo redistricting to achieve racial balance. The Mayor received a thank-you note from Hon. Nicholas Kepple for the recent funding for upgrades to the Southeastern CT Regional Probate Court and a letter to solicit support to extend railroad service from Brattleboro, Vermont to Connecticut.

b. Clerk of the Representative Town Meeting

The next regular RTM meeting will be held on October 10, 2012.

c. Clerk of the Council

No report.

d. Town Manager

The Town Manager announced that the Council will tour Groton Heights School and then proceed to Spicer's Marina to look at the Town's new police boat on September 22, 2012. He noted that the Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. Scholarship Dinner will be on October 18, 2012, and the Eastern Connecticut Chamber of Commerce will host a dinner to award the William Crawford Distinguished Service Award to Ulysses B. Hammond on November 2, 2012. An update was received from City Mayor Galbraith regarding the Thames Street Rehabilitation Project. Construction should begin late winter/early spring. The Town Manager stated that owners of the Central Hall Building continue to seek approvals. Currently, they are looking for another place for their gas (propane) tank. Due to changes in this project, the Town Attorney has suggested that a CGS 8-24 referral be made to the Planning Commission, and another public hearing held.

e. Town Attorney

The Town Attorney is currently reviewing the explanatory text for the upcoming Road Maintenance and Rehabilitation Program Bond Ordinance referendum.

VIII. COMMITTEE REPORTS

a. Community & Cultural Development - Chairman Schmidt

Councilor Schmidt announced that an organizational meeting of the Energy, Efficiency and Conservation Committee will be held on September 24, 2012.

b. Economic Development - Chairman Johnson

No meeting, no report.

c. Education/Health & Social Services - Chairman Watson

No meeting, no report.

d. Environment/Energy - Chairman Peruzzotti

No meeting, no report.

e. Finance - Chairman O'Beirne

No meeting, no report.

f. Personnel/Appointments/Rules - Chairman Flax

Councilor Flax read the minutes of September 11, 2012, which are on file at the Town Clerk's office.

g. Public Safety - Chairman Streeter

No meeting, no report.

h. Public Works/Recreation - Chairman Antipas

No meeting, no report.

i. Committee of the Whole - Mayor Somers

The Committee of the Whole met earlier tonight to discuss the budget. A public meeting will be held on October 13, 2012, at which citizens may provide input on what the Town could do differently to reduce costs and what priorities should be placed on various Town services. The Committee of the Whole is continuing to discuss the Town Manager's evaluation.

IX. UNFINISHED BUSINESS

None.

X. NEW BUSINESS

A motion to approve Resolutions 2012-0219 Appointment of William Everett as a Regular Member of the Historic District Commission, 2012-0267 Reappointment of Eunice Sutphen to Inland Wetlands Agency, 2012-0268 Reappointment of Ilona Oberman to Housing Authority, 2012-0269 Reappointment of John Wirzbicki to Water Pollution Control Authority, 2012-0270 Reappointment of Richard Dixon to Jabez Smith House Committee, and 2012-0271 Appointment of Natalie Billing to Housing Authority was made by Councilor Flax, seconded by Councilor Watson and so voted unanimously.

2012-0219 Appointment of William Everett as a Regular Member of the Historic District Commission

RESOLUTION APPOINTING WILLIAM EVERETT AS A REGULAR MEMBER OF THE HISTORIC DISTRICT COMMISSION

RESOLVED, that William C. Everett, 1 Prospect Street, Mystic, is hereby appointed as a regular member (from an alternate member) to the Historic District Commission for a term ending 12/31/12.

A motion was made by Councilor Flax, seconded by Councilor Watson, that this matter be Adopted.

The motion carried unanimously

2012-0267 Reappointment of Eunice Sutphen to Inland Wetlands Agency

RESOLUTION REAPPOINTING EUNICE SUTPHEN TO THE INLAND WETLANDS AGENCY

RESOLVED, that Eunice Sutphen, 120 Cedar Road, Mystic is hereby reappointed to the Inland Wetlands Agency for a term expiring 12/31/13.

A motion was made by Councilor Flax, seconded by Councilor Watson, that this matter be Adopted.

The motion carried unanimously

2012-0268 Reappointment of Ilona Oberman to Housing Authority

RESOLUTION REAPPOINTING ILONA OBERMAN TO THE HOUSING AUTHORITY

the Housing Authority for a term ending 7/31/17.

A motion was made by Councilor Flax, seconded by Councilor Watson, that this matter be Adopted.

The motion carried unanimously

2012-0269

Reappointment of John Wirzbicki to Water Pollution Control Authority

RESOLUTION REAPPOINTING JOHN WIRZBICKI TO THE WATER POLLUTION CONTROL AUTHORITY

RESOLVED, that John C. Wirzbicki, 355 Brook Street, is reappointed to the Water Pollution Control Authority for a term ending 5/24/15.

A motion was made by Councilor Flax, seconded by Councilor Watson, that this matter be Adopted.

The motion carried unanimously

2012-0270

Reappointment of Richard Dixon to Jabez Smith House Committee

RESOLUTION REAPPOINTING RICHARD DIXON TO THE JABEZ SMITH HOUSE COMMITTEE

RESOLVED, that Richard D. Dixon, 15 Route 27, Old Mystic is hereby reappointed to the Jabez Smith House Committee for a term expiring 09/07/14.

A motion was made by Councilor Flax, seconded by Councilor Watson, that this matter be Adopted.

The motion carried unanimously

2012-0271

Appointment of Natalie Billing to Housing Authority

RESOLUTION APPOINTING NATALIE BILLING TO THE HOUSING AUTHORITY

RESOLVED, that Natalie Billing, 15 Ashby Street, Mystic, is appointed as a member of the Housing Authority for a term ending 7/31/16.

A motion was made by Councilor Flax, seconded by Councilor Watson, that this matter be Adopted.

The motion carried unanimously

2012-0266

Connection Fund Donation

RESOLUTION AUTHORIZING THE TOWN MANAGER TO DIRECT THE DONATION MADE BY THE CONNECTION FUND, INC. TO THE ELIHU SPICER TRUST FUND

WHEREAS, The Connection Fund, Inc., a not for profit 501(c)3 status organization that provides supporting housing to moderate and low income families, owns a number of properties in the Town of Groton, and

WHEREAS, in a letter to the Town Council, The Connection Fund, Inc. has presented a donation in lieu of taxes to the Town of Groton in the amount of \$10,000, and

WHEREAS, the Director of Human Services has indicated that the Elihu Spicer Trust Fund, a long-time source of financial assistance to Groton families and individuals in need, is rapidly being exhausted due to increased client need and falling interest rates, now therefore be it

RESOLVED, that the Town Council directs Town Manager Mark Oefinger to accept the donation made by The Connection Fund, Inc. and to direct it to the Elihu Spicer Trust Fund.

This matter was Re-referred to the Town Council Committee of the Whole.

The Town Manager informed the Council that The Connection Fund, Inc. considers this donation to be payment in lieu of taxes, and it does not approve or disapprove what the town does with its donation. If this resolution is adopted, it will need to be referred to the RTM.

By consensus this resolution was re-referred to the Committee of the Whole for future discussion.

XI. OTHER BUSINESS

By consensus the Committee of the Whole meeting to be held on September 25, 2012, has been cancelled.

2012-0071 Library/Senior Center Veterans Memorial Plaza

LIBRARY/SENIOR CENTER VETERANS MEMORIAL PLAZA

Councilor Streeter would like the Committee of the Whole to discuss information and recommendations for additions to the war memorial.

XII. ADJOURNMENT

A motion to adjourn at 8:12 p.m. was made by Councilor Watson, seconded by Councilor Johnson and so voted unanimously.

Attest:

*Betsy Moukawsher, Town Clerk
Clerk of the Council*

Lori Watrous, Office Assistant